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RECENT PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESSES

FROM AN ADDRESS OF WELCOME:

"From bottom to top, our education is suffering from kindergarten ideas. The American student has been accustomed to get too much help. He relies on the teacher to such a degree as to lessen the teacher's efficiency. He has been so much coddled in the early years of his schooling that when he comes to take up professional education and wants to work hard he often does not know how to do so if he would. Our army experiences in this respect were appalling. Thousands of American lives were lost in the last war because men who were otherwise qualified to be artillery officers could not do sums in logarithms straight unless they had a professor to help them.

"Besides relying too much on the teacher we have, I think, made undiscriminating use of our laboratories. A laboratory can serve two or three quite distinct ends. It is a high grade manual training instrument which can teach the general student the use of hand and eye. It is a potent instrument of discovery where the investigator can find out things that were not known before. Each of these uses is admirable, and the more we can have of them the better. But there is another intermediate use which is not nearly so admirable—the use of laboratories for pseudo-discovery. From the kindergarten through high school and college to technical school, there are teachers who encourage a student to go through the motions of discovering a thing in order that he may remember the principle, and lead him to believe that if he has found out a principle for himself he has done better than if he found it in a book."

A. T. HADLEY.

UNIVERSITIES AND THE WORLD CRISIS.—" . . . My thesis, then, is perfectly simple and clear. It is that European civilization, and that means our own, is today engaged in a fight for its very existence; that this fact is not clearly recognized either here or abroad and that every opportunity must be seized to call attention to the critical aspect of the world situation and for us in America, to our inevitable involvement in the outcome.

There has never been a better demonstration, than in these last few years, of the delicacy of the mechanism of the accumulation of experience, habits and reactions that we call civilization. We had

become accustomed to think of it as a growth of deep root which might bend but not break or as a structure whose foundations had been so firmly laid in the experience of the centuries that nothing but cosmic cataclysm could bring it low. Yet before our eyes we have seen this growth, over great areas of the world's surface, shattered in a night and chaos and confusion result. Whether this destruction shall extend is of course the world problem and the answer is not to be sought in any temporary political adjustments, however superficially reassuring..."

LIVINGSTON FARRAND, *from inaugural address as President of Cornell University.*

GENERAL TRAINING DEFENDED.—"At the present time it would be difficult to name a single man who has come to high position in State, in Church, or in any form of our public life—commercial, industrial, financial, professional—who did not begin at or near the lowest rung of the economic and social ladder. To all such, American life has meant opportunity and American education meant preparation for opportunity and introduction to it. In the simplest way, in the shortest time, and by well-tested instruments, youthful minds were opened to what was going on about and before them and were taught to use those simple instruments by means of which they could both comprehend and produce. The spirit of work was abroad in the land. Everyone wished to improve himself and his condition. Rail-splitters, tailors, tanners, and boys of the tow-path had reached the White House, so why should not the vigorous, high-spirited boy on the Iowa farm, in the Montana mountains, or on the Oregon sheep ranch look forward to doing the same? Perhaps the greatest economic and mechanical achievement of the past half century in America is the building, equipment, and operation of great railways. They are without peers in the world. Today the administrative heads of every one of those great undertakings are not sons of the capitalists whose savings and whose spirit of enterprise started the whole railroad movement, but they are the sons of those who worked with their hands, and they themselves, in almost every instance, saw their first training and their first service in the lowest ranks of railway employees. Opportunity beckoned these men to their positions of present importance and distinction. They rose because their ambition, their spirit of service, and their zeal for work were overpowering and found the open door of opportunity straight in

front of them. Why, you ask, is this no longer easy, or perhaps even possible? The answer is that some of the ruling tendencies of our time, some of the most popularly supported movements in our life and education, are closing, or have closed, this door. The moment that one accepts the amazing fallacy that there is no such thing as general training, that there are no knowledges and no habits which may be made useful in any direction whatsoever, but that every individual must be directly trained for a specific task or calling and then held to it, that individual finds the door of opportunity shut in his face. He is sentenced to remain forever where he is, and the spirit that has made America is starved within him. The whole scheme of vocational training is not only a sham, and a costly sham, but an immense injury both to the individual and to the community, if it is permitted to find its way into the six elementary school years, or, in any but the most restricted fashion, into the six secondary school years. The child who while still an infant is seized upon and prepared for some specific calling is thereafter a prisoner without possibility of becoming a free man. One of the most striking and significant facts adduced in the report just issued by the English Commission on the Classics in Education is that representatives of the wageworkers of England came before the Commission to protest vigorously against having their children deprived of an education in order to become somewhat more effective machines. This is the most cheering note that has been struck in an educational report for many a long day. It may be the rainbow of promise that the storms of folly and sciolism are coming to an end and that a new and brighter day is dawning for those whose school days lie still ahead of them. Moreover, the false and damaging economic notions that are so widely held and acted upon have closed the door of opportunity to millions of Americans. To confine a workman to a particular trade, or even to a particular branch of a particular trade, is to shut the door of opportunity in his face. If a man may not work for ten minutes beyond the eight-hour day excepting for overtime pay, or if he may not turn his hand to some job other than his own for the pleasure and satisfaction of doing it, or if he may not gain additional reward by special skill or industry in his work, or if, however excellent the workman, his daily performance must be held down to the standard of the least competent, the door of opportunity is shut in his face."—NICHOLAS MURRAY BUTLER, *at the installation of Frank P. Graves as President of University of the State of New York.*

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THE COLLEGE CONTRIBUTION TO AMERICAN EDUCATION.—“We come nearest to a substitute for mediaeval logic in our present-day college in the training of our scientific laboratories. There men are to a certain extent learning the method of thought. But they are not, in the most of the colleges, in any systematic and comprehensive way, acquiring that discipline of mind by which one is to discriminate between truth and error; and if we do not give the college student some measure of that power to discriminate between truth and error, there is something seriously lacking in what we have provided for his education.”—ELMER ELSWORTH BROWN.

THE STATE UNIVERSITY.—“There is no example in the history of American higher education of a large and successful state university built upon a private foundation. You cannot inject the quality and genius of the American state university into an old established institution fathered by private motive and developed under private control...

“In this day there can be no argument that a state educational system is complete without a free state university as its apex and crown. That does not mean that the state university is to dominate and control the lower schools, still less other institutions of higher learning. It means merely that free public education shall not stop with the high school, but go on to college grade. It means that it is the conviction and will of the people of the state that the higher reaches of education, education unto leadership and for the professions of which the public has need and which lead to the most ample rewards, shall not be the privilege of the few but the right of all. Not until public education is crowned by a free public university is democracy sincere in declaring that all men are created equal and that the doors to the highest service and the noblest personal attainment are open to the humblest who can show himself worthy to enter them. It is too late to dispute the doctrine that all the resources of a state are liable for the education of every last child in the state. It is too late in free, democratic America to question the obligation of the state to summon its ambitious youth to free and equal opportunity in the most ample learning America can afford...

“The heart of any college or university is its school of liberal arts. The student of engineering, mining, or agriculture, the man who will go directly into business, not less than the man who intends the study

of the law or medicine, needs strong inspiring courses in literature, history, mathematics, economics, philosophy, and political science. In the technical college or university these departments need to be all the stronger for the reason that students have less time for such studies. The manhood and the culture needful for the educated man of any calling cannot be secured through a few elementary courses in language and mathematics in the Freshman year. I would find place in the Junior and Senior years of every technical course for required studies in political science and economics, conducted by the most enthusiastic and inspiring teachers who can be found. Nine-tenths of a man's reading after he leaves college is on subjects related to these departments, and it is essential that he be master of the fundamentals. A state institution should above all things educate good citizens, and the studies fundamental to good citizenship should be strongly represented in its curriculum."—JOHN M. THOMAS, *from inaugural address as President of Pennsylvania State College.*

BETTER TRAINING FOR OUR BEST MINDS.—" . . . That a democracy will have its fair share of men of genius and of scientific ability, that we have had our share of such men, I need not stop to prove. That democracies can set an example for the whole world in severity of academic standards is proved by the deserved eminence of our American professional schools and of the undergraduate training, at once liberal and thorough, of the universities of the great English democracy from which we sprang. However, university education in England is still, as compared with ours, restricted to a much smaller percentage of the population. We have opened wider the doors to higher education, and it is evident that if democratic government is to be successful, these doors must be opened wider still. At the heart of De Tocqueville's criticism still lies the question as to whether the wide popular extension of higher education is compatible with high standards of attainment. No intoxication with our own success must be allowed to persuade us that we have as yet answered this question in the affirmative. Now that the pioneer stage of our education is past, at least for many institutions and many parts of the country, the time has arrived when we must meet that challenge and try to produce, on a far wider scale than we have ever done before, higher education which shall be in fact what it is in name.

"As a nation at this period when we stand at the height of material success, we are in grave danger of falling into the error of believing

that what we have done well is all that there is to do. We have applied knowledge, only a small part of which we discovered ourselves, to the exploitation of natural resources, which we did not create, and have produced the most stupendous material wealth and the highest average standard of living which exists or has ever existed in the world. But man does not live by bread alone, nor by coal or steel or cotton or all that may be made thereof, however cheap and abundant. It is still true that beauty and intelligence and morality are the ends of education and of life. All our industry, unless it serve our spiritual ends, produces only a weary round of degrading toil and degrading luxury, carrying within itself, as the events of the day too clearly show, the seeds of its own dissolution."

—FRANK AYDELOTTE, *from inaugural address as President of Swarthmore College.*

PROVISION FOR SUPERIOR STUDENTS.—“A main defect of our present system of education is the lack of provision for special opportunities for students of outstanding ability. The rate of progress aimed at in college courses is determined by a rough averaging of the capacity of all the students in them, with the result that while this rate is barely maintained by the weakest students, it is very far from keeping the ablest employed. These latter, the most valuable assets of the college and of the country, are liable either to fall into habits of intellectual loafing or to occupy their too abundant leisure by a disproportionate amount of non-academic activities. The objection to assuming a uniform pace for all abilities applies also to a uniform method of instruction. Frequent recitations and lectures may be the best means of keeping the weaker students moving; for the brighter minds they are unnecessary and wasteful. After a good student has acquired habits of study and vital intellectual interest, she needs leisure for thinking and large quantities of solid reading rather than hours a day of class room work. Further, after the large range of subjects required by our curriculum in the first two years, she is ready for a more intensive application to some chosen field, so that at the end of her course she may carry away not merely a great variety of scraps of knowledge, but power and method for mastery of a single department of learning. During the acquisition of this power she should be freed from the constant interruption of tests and examinations, and encouraged to take on her own shoulders the chief responsibility for her mental development.

"Recognizing these principles, the faculty has approved a scheme by which at the end of the sophomore year students having an average of B or better, that is, about 10 per cent of the class, shall be permitted to apply for candidacy for honors in a special field. If approved by the committee in charge and the department of their choice, they will be relieved during the last two years of the routine of class attendance and course examinations. Each candidate will come under the guidance of a general director of her course, who will plan for her a series of units of study, two for each semester, and will arrange the supervision of her work in each of these units by a special instructor. This supervision will in general be conducted by means of suggested readings, written reports calculated to train judgment as well as the power of collecting and organizing facts, and conferences, weekly or fortnightly, in which one report is criticized and instruction given for the preparation of the next. The last semester of the senior year will be devoted to the writing of a long paper and to a general review preparatory to an extensive examination covering the whole field of study of the last two years.

"The details of the scheme will naturally vary according to the subjects chosen, and will have to be worked out in the light of experience; but the general principles just stated will prevail throughout. It is important to note that the scheme is wholly optional, and that any student however brilliant who wishes to follow the present course of study may do so, and may obtain general honors as heretofore. The plan will be observed to differ from the honor schools of the English universities in its requiring that the first two years be devoted to a wide range of prescribed subjects, and from the tutorial system adopted in recent years in some American universities in its restriction of the system of individual guidance to a small picked group, thus avoiding the danger of bankruptcy which is apt to accompany the application of costly methods to the whole body of students, and enabling us to test the new method with students who have proved their seriousness and ability."—W. A. NEILSON, *from report as President of Smith College.*

OUR OVERCROWDED COLLEGES.—"There is no use in mincing the matter. We have today in most of our colleges more students than we can teach. Every professor and every administrator know this is true and, in private at least, acknowledges it. One has only to talk with the progressors who are doing the actual teaching to

find out the true condition of educational work in many of our institutions of higher learning.

"In a lecture room a professor may lecture to as many students as can hear his voice unless it is a lecture illustrated with apparatus and then the limit is the number who can hear the professor talk and can clearly see the experiments which are being performed. In a recitation section the case is entirely different. In a recitation a professor does not lecture—or at least he should not. He should endeavor to find out what the student has succeeded in doing for himself, and he should direct the student's efforts along the right lines of study. It is generally conceded that the undergraduate student should receive a large portion of his training through the recitation room. It is also generally conceded that the number of students in a recitation room should not average more than twenty or thirty. If then it has been necessary, through the large increase of students, to make recitation sections of forty or eighty or more, it is evident that the quality of the instruction must have greatly deteriorated. This is especially true in those subjects in which the student is obliged to prepare some definite task in his study and present accurate results when he goes to the class room. Mathematics and some sciences are good examples of this class of subjects. It is a farce to attempt to teach forty or fifty students in mathematics at one time—that is, if the instructor expects to find out anything about what they have accomplished.

"The effect of large sections can readily be seen in the students. Finding that they are not required to recite every day, many of them make little or no preparation, hoping to get by on review questions or lucky guesses. The professor who prides himself upon not allowing such things in his class room might think very differently if he could hear some of his students talking among themselves...

"When there are definite and normal ratios between faculty, equipment and number of students, no very careful study of the correlation between these factors is imperative. But when it is found that the number of students is rapidly increasing and there will be serious difficulties arising from abnormal relations between the three factors mentioned, then it seems to me an institution should make a very careful survey of its facilities.

"That is what every manufacturer does. When orders are normal and it is known that the factory can fill them with its machinery and its help, no one worries very much; when orders come in increased

numbers the factory requires its expert on efficiency and production to make a study of the relation between the number of machines, the number of men, and the amount of work it is possible to turn out under given conditions. Very few institutions of learning have ever followed this plan.

"Perhaps the conditions which I am about to name have something to do with the quality of our teaching. These are not intended primarily to be criticisms but statements of fact.

"First—Many of our college and university presidents are not trained educators or, if they are, they are not allowed to use much of their ability as educators but must give their whole time to executive work, at least when it is not taken up with raising money to meet the college bills. They know little or nothing at first-hand about the kind of teaching that is being done in any department of the institutions over which they preside, and they would never think of visiting a class room or lecture room for fear of offending the professor in charge.

"Second—Deans are also admirable executives; but they have not time for or spend very little time in the discussion of education and its principles as applied to the college in which they are serving.

"Third—Heads of departments, most of whom are ripe scholars with high ideals of teaching and of attainment, do not consider it their duty to train the young instructors under them, nor do they know in any detail what those instructors do in the class rooms.

"Fourth—Quite a large part of the teaching in our colleges is done by young instructors, many of them the finest product of our universities; but most of them have had no experience in teaching previous to their college appointments or training in pedagogical methods. It is safe to say that most of them have not the slightest idea that there is such a thing as a theory of teaching, and they know nothing about the modern methods which must be studied by nearly every common school teacher before he or she can obtain an appointment. If our undergraduate colleges are to stand pre-eminently as teaching institutions, they must be staffed by professors who are not only profound scholars but who are also trained teachers. Those who are heads of departments and the deans of colleges must be familiar with the work that is done in every class room.

"If teaching is the principal function of an undergraduate college, would it not be well to have in every such college a professor of education who would confer with the heads of departments in regard

to the best methods of teaching and give some training in teaching methods to the young instructors? I feel certain that if a faculty would cordially co-operate with a professor of education, not only would our methods of teaching be improved, but the number of students who leave on account of failures in their studies would materially decrease. Although teaching is to be the principal duty of the professors and instructors whom we appoint, the first question usually asked in regard to any man proposed for a college position is "What has he produced?" If his teaching ability is discussed at all, it is usually taken up as an entirely secondary thing.

"... I would not for a moment advocate limiting the opportunities for a higher education of these capable of profiting thereby, but I do believe that no institution has any right to admit to its class rooms students whom it cannot properly teach and whose very presence tends to lower the standard of scholarship. Let us place scholarship before numbers and quality before quantity. May it not be true that, when we do our work with a few superlatively well, means will come to us to do the same kind of work with many?"—CHARLES S. HOWE, *Case School of Applied Science*.